

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A liquid electrophotographic developing apparatus, comprising:

a developing unit, having an elongated opening disposed adjacent to a moving image-bearing surface of a photoreceptor, for converting an electrostatic latent image into a toner image; and

an air duct, provided around the elongated opening of the developing unit, containing air flow therein having a predetermined air pressure to hold a liquid developer within a space [substantially]between the elongated opening and the image-bearing surface while permitting toner particles in the liquid developer deposited on the image-bearing surface to be retained by the image-bearing surface and allowing volatile solvent in the developer to be vaporized into the surrounding atmosphere.

2. (Original) The liquid electrophotographic developing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the air duct is provided with air pressure control means for maintaining the air flow at a predetermined pressure.

3. (Original) The liquid electrophotographic developing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the air pressure control means comprises an air pressure sensor and a flow control valve.

4. (Original) The liquid electrophotographic developing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the developing unit is provided with flow control means for controlling flow of the liquid developer.

5. (Original) The liquid electrophotographic developing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the flow control means comprises a flow pressure sensor and a control valve.

6. (Currently Amended) A liquid electrophotographic developing apparatus, comprising:

a plurality of developing units, each having an elongated opening disposed adjacent to a moving image-bearing surface of a photoreceptor which passes adjacent to the plurality of developing units in succession, for converting an electrostatic latent image into a toner image, each of the plurality of developing units containing a liquid developer of a different color; and

a plurality of air ducts, each provided around the elongated opening of a respective one of the plurality of developing units, containing air flow therein having a predetermined air pressure, for causing the liquid developer to be retained [adjacent to the elongated opening] within a space between the elongated opening and the image-bearing surface in the developing unit while depositing toner particles on an electrostatic latent image on the image-bearing surface of the photoreceptor as the photoreceptor moves adjacent to the elongated opening.

7. (Original) The liquid electrophotographic developing apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the air duct is provided with air pressure control means for maintaining the air flow at a predetermined pressure.

8. (Original) The liquid electrophotographic developing apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the air pressure control means comprises an air pressure sensor and a flow control valve.

9. (Original) The liquid electrophotographic developing apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the developing unit is provided with flow control means for controlling flow of the liquid developer.

10. (Original) The liquid electrophotographic developing apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the flow control means comprises a flow pressure sensor and a control valve.

11. (New) A liquid electrophotographic developing apparatus, comprising:
a developing unit, having an elongated opening disposed adjacent to a moving image-bearing surface of a photoreceptor, for converting an electrostatic latent image into a toner image; and
an air duct, provided around the elongated opening of the developing unit, containing air flow therein having a predetermined air pressure to hold a liquid developer within a space substantially between the elongated opening and the image-bearing surface while permitting toner particles in the liquid developer deposited on the image-bearing surface to be retained by the image-bearing surface and allowing volatile solvent in the developer to be vaporized into the surrounding atmosphere, wherein the air duct is provided with air pressure control means for maintaining the air flow at a predetermined pressure, the air pressure control means comprising an air pressure sensor and a flow control valve.

12. (New) A liquid electrophotographic developing apparatus, comprising:
a developing unit, having an elongated opening disposed adjacent to a moving image-bearing surface of a photoreceptor, for converting an electrostatic latent image into a toner image; and

an air duct, provided around the elongated opening of the developing unit, containing air flow therein having a predetermined air pressure to hold a liquid developer within a space

substantially between the elongated opening and the image-bearing surface while permitting toner particles in the liquid developer deposited on the image-bearing surface to be retained by the image-bearing surface and allowing volatile solvent in the developer to be vaporized into the surrounding atmosphere, wherein the air duct is provided with air pressure control means for maintaining the air flow at a predetermined pressure, the air pressure control means comprising an air pressure sensor and a flow control valve;

wherein the developing unit is provided with flow control means for controlling flow of the liquid developer, the flow control means comprising a flow pressure sensor and a control valve.